



**AmeriCorps*State 2014-2015 Request for Proposals
For All New, Re-compete, and Planning Grant Applicants**

Issued: August 1, 2013

Due: September 3, 2013



OFFICE OF FAITH-BASED AND COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

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Thank you for your interest in an AmeriCorps*State grant. This packet contains information pertaining to the Concept Paper application process for 2014-2015 AmeriCorps*State grants funded by the Indiana Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI). All **New** and **Re-compete** applicants must submit a Concept Paper. **Planning Grant** applicants need only submit the one-page Notice of Intent portion of these instructions.

The Concept Paper is meant as a first step in drafting your full application, and as a way to give a brief overview of the program you will be proposing for funding.

- Applicants **must** submit a Concept Paper in order to be eligible to compete for 2014-15 Program Year funding (*except continuation applicants-1st and 2nd year of current funded programs*).
- **Eligible applicants include:**
 - nonprofit organizations in compliance with IRS Section 501(c)(3) regulations (including religious organizations);
 - schools;
 - institutions of higher education;
 - state agencies; subdivisions of the state including cities, counties, and municipalities; or a partnership or collaboration of any of the above entities.
- Concept Papers must be typed and double-spaced and should be five pages or less (single-sided), not including the cover page/notice of intent.
- Concept papers and Notices of Intent should be submitted electronically to Kristen Dmytryk (kdmytryk@ofbci.in.gov) by 5:00 pm, September 3, 2013.
 - The subject line should read: Concept Paper or Notice of Intent, and the electronic file should be named <Name of legal applicant Concept Paper/Notice of Intent>.

If you have any questions about the application process please contact Kristen Dmytryk at (317) 232-2504, kdmytryk@ofbci.in.gov.

Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

Hoosiers are a dedicated and selfless people who have a long and proud tradition of helping their neighbors and those less fortunate than themselves. Across Indiana, committed volunteers in faith and community-based organizations bring unique skills, services, and resources to address many of the state's unmet needs surrounding **housing, hunger, and health**. Indeed, there are many opportunities for Indiana's robust civic sector to partner with government to deliver services more effectively than either can do alone. The Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (OFBCI), with assistance from the Indiana Commission on Community Service and Volunteerism (ICCSV), connects needs and resources through community-based organizations and faith-based organizations that serve those in need. The OFBCI administers the Indiana Commission on Community Service and Volunteerism (ICCSV). The ICCSV is a governor-appointed administrative agent of the AmeriCorps*State programs in Indiana for the Corporation for National and Community Service. Learn more about the agency at:

<http://www.in.gov/ofbci/2355.htm>

Our mission is to advance service and volunteerism by informing, connecting, and promoting opportunities and resources that enrich the lives of Hoosiers.

AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), an independent federal agency. The mission of the CNCS is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic participation through service and volunteering. For more than 18 years, the CNCS—through its Senior Corps and AmeriCorps programs—has helped to engage millions of citizens in meeting community and national challenges through service and volunteer action.

Through its grant-making efforts and support of traditional volunteerism, the CNCS:

- Directs the power of national service to solve a common set of challenges;
- Expands opportunities for all Americans to serve;
- Builds the enduring capacity of individuals, organizations, and communities to effectively use service and volunteering to solve community problems; and
- Embraces innovative solutions that work.

In order to **maximize the impact** of the investment in national service, the CNCS is focused on funding programs that can demonstrate an evidence-based approach to creating community impact and solving community problems. Applicants for AmeriCorps funding must demonstrate a well-researched need within the community, a sound plan to engage AmeriCorps members in meeting the community need, and the ability to design and implement effective evaluation systems to capture the outcomes of the AmeriCorps program and members' service.

AmeriCorps grants are awarded to eligible organizations to recruit, train, and manage AmeriCorps members during a defined term of service. An AmeriCorps member is an individual who is enrolled in an approved national service position and engages in community service. Members may receive a living allowance and other benefits while serving, and AmeriCorps positions may be full-time, part-time, or less than part-time. Upon successful completion of their service, members may receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education Award from the National Service Trust.

The CNCS administers AmeriCorps funding through a network of State Service Commissions. These commissions review grant applications, select grant recipients for state funding or national competition, and monitor grant activities. Extensive information about AmeriCorps, as well as details on all other funding and activities at the Corporation may be found at www.nationalservice.gov.

Funding Available. AmeriCorps*State funding comes to Indiana primarily through two separate funding streams – formula and competitive funds. The ICCSV receives formula funds from the Corporation through a population-based allocation. Competitive funds are awarded through a national competition to programs that have competed successfully at both the state and federal levels. While programs funded through the national competition are typically veteran programs, larger in size, and/or have particularly innovative program designs, first-time applicants may also

be funded at the competitive level. This RFP is required to be followed for both streams of funding.

The ICCSV will award formula funds for 2014-2015 in the spring of 2014. The amount is contingent upon how much formula funding is allocated to the OFBCI from the CNCS based off of the final appropriation from Congress.

There are 4 kinds of AmeriCorps funding opportunities available this Request for Proposals:

- ***Operating Grants.*** Operating grants support fully developed plans to implement a new or existing AmeriCorps program. The instructions for the New and Recompeting Programs are contained within this Request for Proposals.
- ***Planning Grants.*** Planning grants are designed to assist faith- or small, community-based organizations in their development of a strong AmeriCorps program design. The purpose of planning grants is to bring small, community-based and/or faith-based organizations to the verge of implementation so that they may compete successfully for operating assistance in the following grant cycle. In general, planning grants do not exceed \$30,000 and cover a period of 6 to 12 months.
- ***Three Month Development/Nine Month Operating Grants.*** The ICCSV recognizes that developing a high-quality AmeriCorps program takes time. New applicants may propose a three-month planning/development period, followed by nine-months of operating an AmeriCorps program for the first year of their AmeriCorps*State program. The intent of the three-month planning/development period is to allow new programs the opportunity to develop the systems and processes necessary to operate an effective, efficient, high-quality program. Applicants selecting this model are strongly encouraged to include less than full-time members, as it would be difficult for many members to complete the required 1,700 hours in the nine-month time frame. Please note that ICCSV will not select applicants proposing this “3-9” design to compete in the competition for competitive AmeriCorps funding at the national level. Programs are not allowed to have full time members who select this option.
- ***Education Award Program (EAP) Grants.*** Education Award Programs do not offer living allowances to AmeriCorps members but do provide an education award upon successful completion of a term of national service.

Program Size. In order to provide member positions in quantities that make an impact on the identified community need, applicants will be given priority if they request a minimum of 15 Member Service Years (MSY) AmeriCorps members. No fewer than 10 MSY can be requested. Applications for 10 - 15 MSY will be considered. Organizations are urged to partner with other organizations in your community or throughout the state to apply for AmeriCorps funding. One organization must serve as the legal applicant and fiduciary. When partnering with other organizations, you are encouraged to seek organizations that share a similar mission or focus on similar issues.

Match Expectations. Match Requirements in the AmeriCorps Regulations (informational purposes only – no budget information required to be submitted with concept paper)

Minimum grantee share is 24% of program costs for the first three years. Overall grantee share of total program costs increases gradually beginning in Year 4 to 50% by the tenth year of funding and any year thereafter.

Grant Period. Grants awarded through this selection process will support programming beginning September 1, 2014. The Corporation and the ICCSV generally provide funding for a three-year grant period, with demonstrated success toward achieving program objectives and the completion of a yearly continuation request.

State Priority Funding (Good to Great plan linked) **Areas:**

- **Health Corps**
- **Housing Corps**
- **Hunger Corps**
- **Education Corps**

Programs focused on one or more of these four areas will be given priority in the formula funding decision process. It's recommended to review the Good to Great plan for the agency which describes more about the priorities. Some of the national performance measures (economic opportunity, education, healthy futures) below have multiple standardized measures that can be utilized for the above priorities.

National Priority Funding **Areas:**

- **Disaster Services:** Grants will help individuals and communities prepare, respond, recover, and mitigate disasters and increase community resiliency. Grant activities will:
 - Increase the preparedness of individuals
 - Increase individuals' readiness to respond
 - Help individuals recover from disasters
 - Help mitigate disasters
- **Economic Opportunity:** Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to the improved economic well-being and security of economically disadvantaged people. Grant activities will help economically disadvantaged people to:
 - Have improved access to services and benefits aimed at contributing to their enhanced financial literacy
 - Transition into or remain in safe, healthy, affordable housing
 - Have improved employability leading to increased success in becoming employed
- **Education:** Grants will provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved educational outcomes for economically disadvantaged people, especially children. Grant activities will improve:
 - School readiness for economically disadvantaged young children
 - Educational and behavioral outcomes of students in low-achieving elementary, middle, and high schools
 - The preparation for and prospects of success in post-secondary education institutions for economically disadvantaged students

- **Environmental Stewardship:** Grants will provide direct services that contribute to increased energy and water efficiency, renewable energy use, or improving at-risk ecosystems, and support increased citizen behavioral change leading to increased efficiency, renewable energy use, and ecosystem improvements particularly for economically disadvantaged households and economically disadvantaged communities. Grant activities will:
 - Decrease energy and water consumption
 - Improve at-risk ecosystems
 - Increase behavioral changes that lead directly to decreased energy and water consumption or improve at-risk ecosystems
 - Increase green training opportunities that may lead to decreased energy and water consumption or improve at-risk ecosystems
- **Healthy Futures:** Grants will meet health needs within communities including access to care, aging in place, addressing childhood obesity. Grant activities will:
 - Increase seniors' ability to remain in their own homes with the same or improved quality of life for as long as possible
 - Increase physical activity and improve nutrition in youth with the purpose of reducing childhood obesity
 - Improve access to primary and preventative health care for communities served by CNCS-supported programs (access to health care)
- **Veterans & Military Families:** Grants will positively impact the quality of life of veterans and improve military family strength. Grant activities will increase:
 - The number of veterans and military service members and their families served by CNCS-supported programs
 - The number of veterans and military family members engaged in service provision through CNCS-supported programs
- **Capacity Building:** Grants will provide support for capacity building activities provided by national service participants. Examples of capacity building activities include:
 - Recruiting and/or managing community volunteers
 - Implementing effective volunteer management practices
 - Completing community assessments that identify goals and recommendations
 - Developing new systems and business processes (technology, performance management, training, etc) or enhancing existing systems and business processes

Timeline for 2014-15 Indiana AmeriCorps*State Formula Grant Process:

Release Concept Paper Instructions:	August 1, 2013
Concept paper due:	September 3, 2013
Full Application/RFP Posted:*	September 30, 2013 (tentative)
Grant applications due via eGrants:*	November 1, 2013 (tentative)
Staff and peer review	November/December 2013
CNCS review of competitive applications	January – May 2014
Funding Notification Letters Sent:*	June 2014 (tentative)
Grant award period begins:	September 2014

*TENTATIVE, pending release of CNCS timeline

Concept Paper Development Tips

It is extremely important that your proposal is thoroughly completed and well-presented. Below are ideas to help you present your project in the best way possible:

- *Assess your fit with AmeriCorps:* Be sure that you are familiar with AmeriCorps program requirements. Demonstrate this knowledge in your paper.
- *Paint a vivid picture of your need:* Help reviewers understand who you are, what the needs of your community are, and how AmeriCorps can help better serve Indiana citizens, etc. Back up your need with evidence and avoid generalities and boilerplate language. There is not room in the Concept Paper for filler language.
- *Follow the rules:* Provide the information in the order and format that it is requested. Do not attach any information that is not explicitly required; do not refer to web links for further information.
- *Focus on your paper's readability:* Present your organization and program ideas in the best possible light so that the focus remains on your content and the needs of your community. One important way to do this is to make your document very easy to read by staying focused on your ideas and presenting a well-written and very polished document. Engage a strong writer and proof reader to complete all elements of the Concept Paper (especially the narratives), and be sure that you have time to carefully check your document for grammar, spelling, etc. prior to submission. Avoid overusing acronyms and write the Concept Paper for a broad audience of readers who are not familiar with your organization or the community you serve.
- *Do your research:* Be sure to make use of the resources you have to learn about AmeriCorps and develop a strong proposal. Find these at www.in.gov/ofbcj and <http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/ameri-corps> and www.nationalserviceresources.org.

Indiana AmeriCorps*State Concept Paper Outline Instructions

A concept paper should consist of the components outlined below.

Planning grant applicants need only complete a one-page Notice of Intent.

1. Notice of Intent/Cover Page

On one page, list the following information:

Proposed Project Title:	
Contact Person/Title:	
E-mail Address:	Telephone:
Name of Legal Applicant Organization:	
Tax ID:	DUNS #:
Address:	
City/State/Zip:	

Issue area(s) to be addressed:

_____ Hunger Corps
_____ Housing Corps
_____ Health Corps
_____ Education Corps
_____ CNCS National Priority _____

Geographic area to be served:

Service Term	# members requested	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance *	Maximum Total Living Allowance *
Full-time		1700	\$12,100	\$24,200
Half-time		900	n/a	\$12,800
Reduced Half-time		675	n/a	\$9,600
Quarter-time		450	n/a	\$6,400
Minimum-time		300	n/a	\$4,260
TOTAL				

* based on prior program year, might change slightly when full application instructions released

2. Program Narrative

In five pages or less, double-spaced and single-sided, provide the following:

Existing programs: please see additional instructions in italics

- A. **Need:** What community need will your program strive to address? What is the target community you will service? Provide a brief summary of specific evidence to support the need for your proposed AmeriCorps program.
- B. **AmeriCorps Member Service/Solution:** Describe the structure of the proposed AmeriCorps program. Explain how this program will offer a new or expanded solution to the identified community problem. What will the organization accomplish that it would not otherwise accomplish through existing staff and/or volunteers? Include details on the number of AmeriCorps member positions requested, the location of members' service, and the types of direct services to be performed. Be sure to explain the connection between the community need identified in the section above and the members' direct service.
- C. **Evidence-Based/Evidence-Informed and Measurable Community Impact:**

Describe how the interventions the AmeriCorps members and volunteers are engaged in are both evidence-based or evidence-informed and will have a measurable community impact.

The intervention is evidence-based if programs can demonstrate community impact and solve community problems through an evidence-based approach (e.g. based on research or backed by statistically significant evaluation findings). The intervention is evidence-informed if programs can demonstrate community impact and solve community problems through an evidence-informed approach (e.g. internal performance data, theory of change based on research).

- D. **Program Management:** Describe how the legal applicant will oversee an effective program. Describe how AmeriCorps member will be recruited, selected, trained, and supervised throughout their terms of service. Describe how the program will ensure that it operates in accordance with all AmeriCorps regulations. If applicable, identify service sites, and describe site supervisor training and monitoring plan.
- a. *Existing programs only, please give a brief description of the performance of your measurable outcomes to date. Please include program compliance, performance measurements, enrollment, and retention rates.*
- E. **Organizational Capability:** Provide a description of the legal applicant's institutional capacity to operate or coordinate a program comparable to that proposed. Include a summary of the agency's budget, total number of staff, and brief descriptions of agency programs and operation. Describe the plan to raise the required matching funds for the AmeriCorps grant, and list the partner organizations that will be involved in the program.
- F. **Organizational Track Record:** Briefly describe your expertise and accomplishment in the program activities you propose for the AmeriCorps program.